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DEPT FOR AF/W AND INL; LAGOS FOR DEA

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TAGS: [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [NI](#)  
SUBJECT: ATTORNEY GENERAL BAYO OJO AND POLITICS AT NDLEA;  
TWO STEPS FORWARD, ONE STEP BACK

Classified By: INL Robert E. Downey for reasons 1.4. (B & D)

¶1. (C) According to NDLEA,s Director General, Lanre Ipinmisho, the forced &retirement8 earlier this year of 71 NDLEA officers for various offenses has not been finalized. Ipinmisho claims that several of the 71, including Vincent Ossai, have complained to Attorney General Bayo Ojo protesting their innocence and lack of due process. Despite the fact that President Obasanjo himself reportedly approved the &retirements,8 Ojo allegedly agreed to establish a panel to review the cases. Ipinmisho, a former personal assistant to Ojo, told LEA May 12 that he enlisted the assistance of EFCC chairman Nuhu Ribadu to circumvent the AG and obtain reconfirmation of the retirements from the president. Ojo has now backed off and the &retirements8 stand for the time being. Ipinmisho also claims that several of those retired retired are in fact drug barons or working with drug barons and that charges will be brought later this year.

¶2. (C) Ipinmisho also told LEA that with Ribadu,s help, he managed to get NDLEA,s budget increased from Naira 7.7 million per month (approximately \$60,000) to Naira 27.7 million per month (approximately \$230,000.). Although Ipinmisho did not provide any details, he was obviously pleased with the almost 400% increase. However, if the Naira 27.7 million is NDLEA,S total budget, in a country with almost \$50 billion in foreign reserves, it still reflects a less than adequate commitment to combating narcotics.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: While the budget number appears quite low, a four fold increase is a significant improvement. However, it is somewhat disconcerting that the AG is being manipulated by alleged drug barons within NDLEA and gives credence to allegations that he may be working with them. Questioning the president's decision with a possible review panel is not something any GON official would do lightly. To do so would indicate that he was either seriously threatened or well compensated.

¶4. (C) When the 71 &retirements8 were announced earlier this year, shortly after Ipinmisho,s transfer to the NDLEA from the AG,s office, we assumed that the AG was fully behind the action. We later learned that this was not the case and that the president had ordered the action without the AG,s knowledge. Ribadu and Giade had orchestrated the "retirements" and the AG apparently was furious. When he learned of the AG's plan to review the retirements, Giade threatened to resign. Ribadu then reportedly told the AG to "stay away" from NDLEA matters and the AG dropped the review panel idea. President Obasanjo himself then called Giade and

asked what he wanted. When the chairman said he needed more money the president approved the budget increase on the spot.

15. (C) It is impossible to predict how long the AG will remain in his position or how badly he has irritated the President. His recent letter to the Ambassador threatening a deterioration in U.S.-GON bilateral relations over the Abdulsalami case may have been designed to get back into Obasanjo's good graces. It is clear, however, that he is no friend to the U.S. According to Ipinmisho, he even complained about "doing the Americans' bidding" with regard to the 71 retirements, a comment allegedly prompted by Ribadu reminding him that a reversal of the decision would be a major negative during the narcotics certification process. However, given the president's resolve, (which we expect to carry over into the Yar'adua Administration) and Ribadu's cooperation, NDLEA Chairman Giade may be able to effect positive change at NDLEA. But progress will at best be excruciatingly slow.

16. (C) Ipinmisho also remains an enigma. He clearly wants to distance himself from the AG publicly and told DEA CA that he personally told the AG that he, the AG, was "defending a bunch of criminals," a claim he repeated to LEA. However, it is still not clear if he is there to help Giade clean up NDLEA (he told LEA that there would be more retirements this year) or if he is the AG's mole and there to discredit Giade and get him replaced with someone more amenable to helping his former boss protect the drug barons.  
CAMPBELL